Joint BA/MA in Computational Social Science

Department Website: http://macss.uchicago.edu

The Master of Arts in Computational Social Science (http://macss.uchicago.edu) is a two-year program of graduate study. It has a structured curriculum, with a total of 18 required and elective courses tailored to the disciplinary track a student follows. Students submit an article-length MA thesis in their second year, after completing a three-quarter research commitment working directly with a member of our executive or affiliated faculty (http://macss.uchicago.edu/directories/full/all).

The program aims to produce leading social scientists in each of our core social science fields—economics, sociology, political science, psychology, history, and anthropology—producing competitive PhD applicants, well-trained in computational approaches, who have mastered the research and analytical skills necessary to make important contributions.

Students receive close mentorship from the program’s faculty director, academic staff, and members of our executive and affiliated faculty.

They receive full professional support from our director of career services, with biweekly workshops, career planning, and employer recruitment.

Finally, all MA students may participate in an optional summer practicum between their first and second years, with internships drawn from academic and professional organizations. International students have three years of STEM work eligibility after they graduate.

Program Requirements and Course Work

All MA students complete the equivalent of 18 graduate seminars and write an article-length MA thesis.

The courses are selected with the advice of our academic staff and follow different disciplinary tracks, tailored to the research commitments of each student.

In their first year, all students take a three-course core in Perspectives: Perspectives on Computational Analysis, Perspectives on Computational Modeling, and Perspectives on Advanced Computational Topics.

Most take a three-course sequence on Computer Science with Applications (with more advanced courses for students with prior exposure and an optional sequence in Computational Neuroscience for psychology concentrators).

The remaining three courses vary and depend on the student’s prior training and disciplinary path. Priority will go to any needed courses in statistics, linear algebra, or advanced math in particular disciplines (e.g., real analysis in economics). If those requirements are met, the student will take up to three social science electives in their area of research.

In their second year, all students complete a three-course “research commitment,” working directly with a member of our computational faculty, producing an MA thesis modeled on a professional journal article. They take three advanced courses in computational methods, tailored to their disciplinary interest. And they complete three social science electives in their area of research.

If students desire, they can petition to replace any portion of the three-quarter research commitment with social science electives or other courses in computational methods.

Outside of their course work, all MA students are expected to attend our weekly Computation Workshop, where advanced scholars and invited guests present drafts of their research for critique and discussion.

Admission

Students who wish to pursue a joint BA/MA degree should consult first with their College adviser, then with the senior adviser for joint BA/MA programs (Pete Segall, psegall@uchicago.edu), and finally with the associate dean of students (Kelly Pollock, kpollock@uchicago.edu) in the Autumn Quarter of their third year.

Any questions about the Master of Arts in Computational Social Science can be directed to our managing director (Chad Cyrenne, c-cyrenne@uchicago.edu).

Application Requirements

- Applicants are expected to have a GPA of 3.55 or higher.
- Applications are due by February 1.
- The application (https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply) is submitted online to the dean of students of the Division of the Social Sciences. (See apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply.)
- BA/MA applicants should not pay the application fee. Email admissions@ssd.uchicago.edu (admissions@ssd.uchicago.edu?subject=Fee Waiver BA/MA Dual Degree Program) to ask how to receive the fee waiver.
- GRE scores are not required.
- Prospective BA/MA students are expected to complete all of their general education requirements and all but three of their BA requirements before they begin the BA/MA program in the Autumn Quarter of their fourth year.
- Up to three graduate courses can be used as electives in the undergraduate program or can be applied to the undergraduate major, by petition to the director of undergraduate studies.
Students in the BA/MA program are charged tuition at graduate rates in their fourth year. They retain whatever aid has been provided in the College. In their fifth year, students are eligible for an award of two-thirds tuition if they achieve a 3.4 GPA over their first nine courses.

Students may walk and receive the BA in June of their fourth year if they wish to graduate with other members of their College class.

All other requirements for the MA degree are identical.

How to Apply
The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions and deadlines, is available online at: https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply.
For additional information about our program, please contact E. G. Enbar, our student affairs administrator, at 773.702.8312 or egenbar@uchicago.edu.
Please also visit our website: https://macss.uchicago.edu
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.